



Baltimore City Fire Department

In cooperation with Vacant Property Security

Overview

- What is VPS
- Who is using it
- Where is it being used
- Construction
- Forced Entry Problems
- Firefighter Safety

What is VPS?

- Vacant Property Systems (VPS) is a temporary security system to protect properties from unauthorized entry during renovation.
- It has been in the city since the late 1990's



Who uses it?

- VPS is currently used by contractors to secure their property from unauthorized entry



Construction

- Doors
 - Color coded combination
 - Key
- Windows
- Metal Bars

Door Frame

- Typical door frame assembly
- Set into existing door frame
- Held in place by metal channel bars at the top and bottom of the door

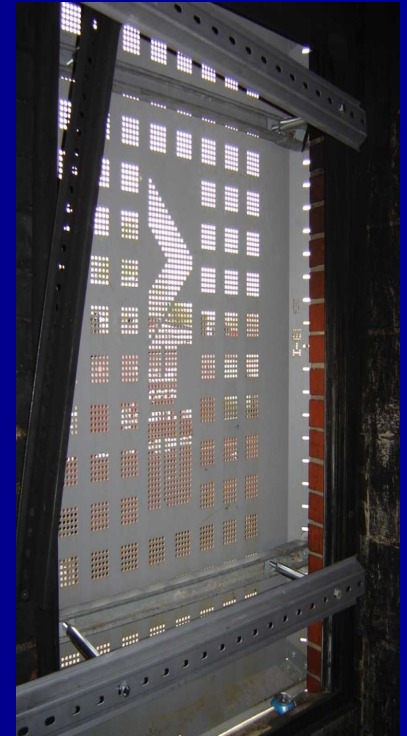


Construction

- Metal Bars



Steel

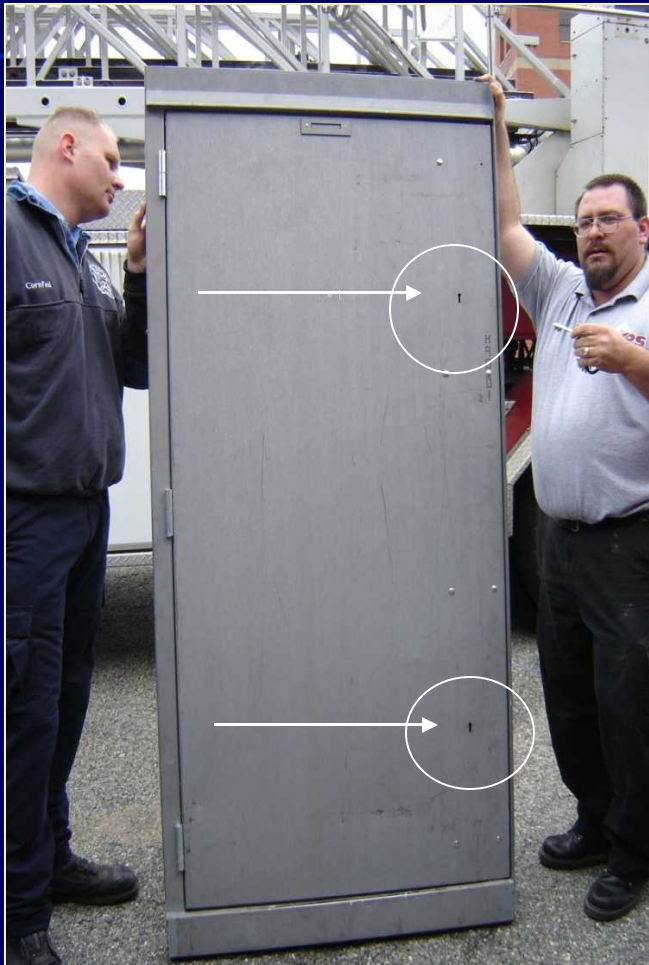


Sheet Metal

Door Frame



Doors-2 types



Key entry



Color coded

Keyed Door

- Requires key to enter
- Extremely difficult to cut with saw
- Cannot be pried away

Keyed Door



Color coded Door

- Easier to gain entry
- Color coded combination
- Combination is different for each door



Color coded frame



Door-bottom



Door-top

Color coded frame



Bottom Frame



Top Frame

Color coded operation

- Unlocked by knowing the correct color code sequence
- Opened by sliding the lever down

Color coded door

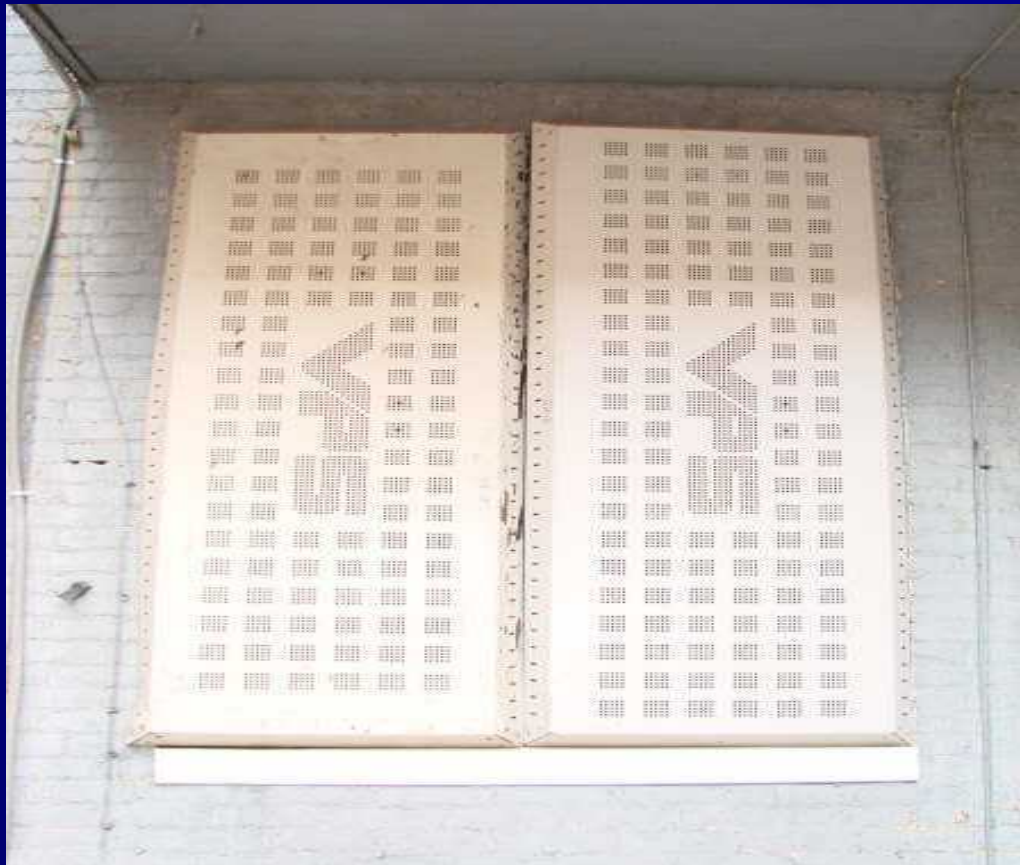


Interior View



Exterior View

Windows



Windows

- Metal construction
- Held in place by metal channel bars
- Channel bars connected to each other by bolts

Window



Window



Window

- The location of the bars from the exterior can be determined by locating the tabs
- 2-each top and bottom



Window



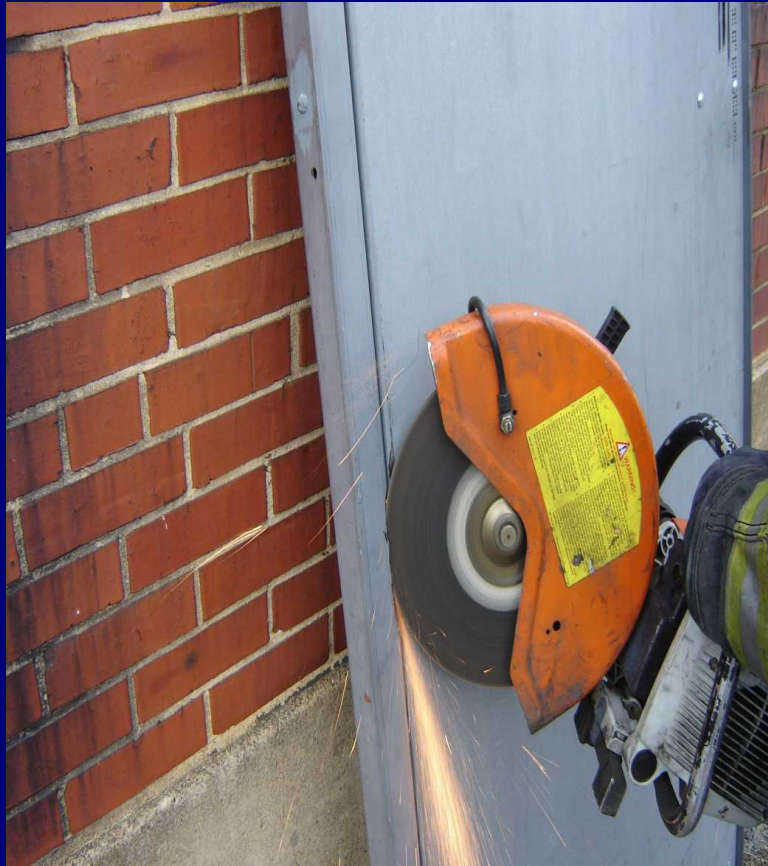
Forced Entry



Keyed Door

- No way to determine where the brass bar that locks the door is
- Small area to cut
- 10 minutes cutting and still did not breach the locking bar

Keyed Door



Keyed door continued

- Hinges cut easily
- Could not pry door from the hinge side due to brass lock would not clear the door frame
- Easier to find a window, enter and remove metal hanger bar or use the handle if equipped with one

Keyed door continued



Rear door (interior)



No access from the
exterior

Keyed door continued

- Using a Halligan or Flathead Axe try to leverage one side of the metal bar by banging up or down
- A saw is ideal however if the area is filled with smoke the saw will not work



Keyed door continued



Keyed door continued

- Depending on the type of metal bar used you may be able to beat the center of the bar enough to cause it to pull away from the wall



Color Coded



Color Coded

- Easy to gain entry
- 2 Methods

Color coded-Method 1

- Locate single bolt head under color coded buttons



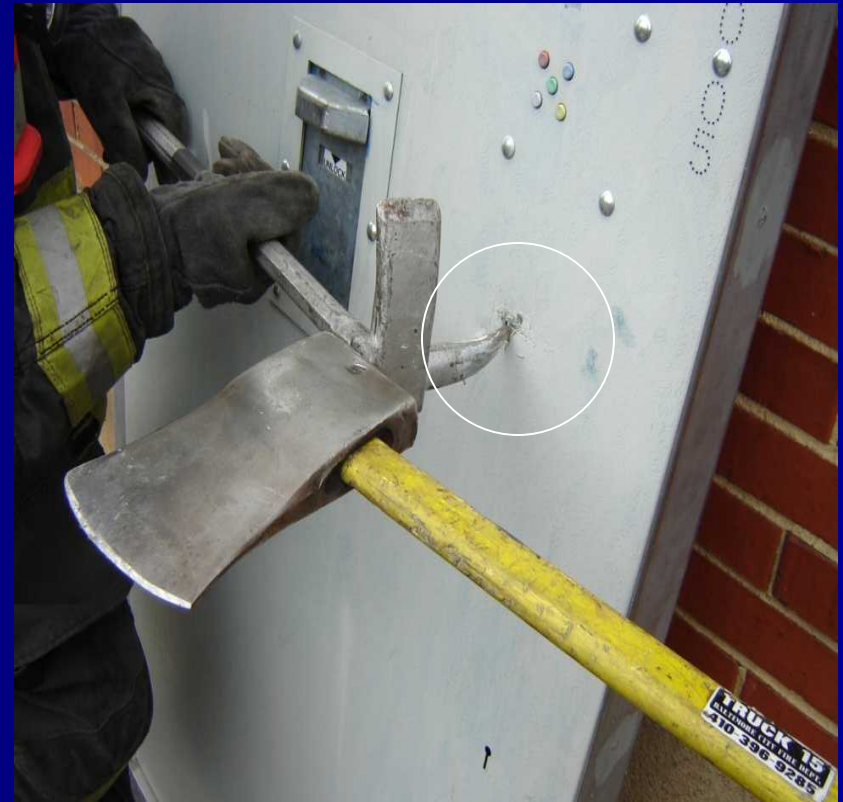
Color coded-Method 1

- Shear the head off with the bill end of the halligan bar



Color coded-Method 1

- Use the pick end of the halligan and with a flat head axe or maul, drive the bolt through



Color coded-Method 1

- Slide handle down and open door



Color coded method-2

- Make triangle cut approximately 3" to the left of the handle



Color coded method-2

- Reach in and slide handle down.
- Use caution as door may be hot!



Window entry-option 1

- Locate the tabs on the side of the window (bottom first)



Window entry-option 1



Make your first cut at the bottom center

Window entry-option 1

- Next with a ladder positioned to the side cut the top center
- Careful as the window will suddenly drop with no warning





Firefighter Safety

- Dangers to Firefighters:
 - Building typically under construction
 - Fire may be intentionally set for insurance reasons
 - Delayed entry will allow fire spread and further weakening the structure



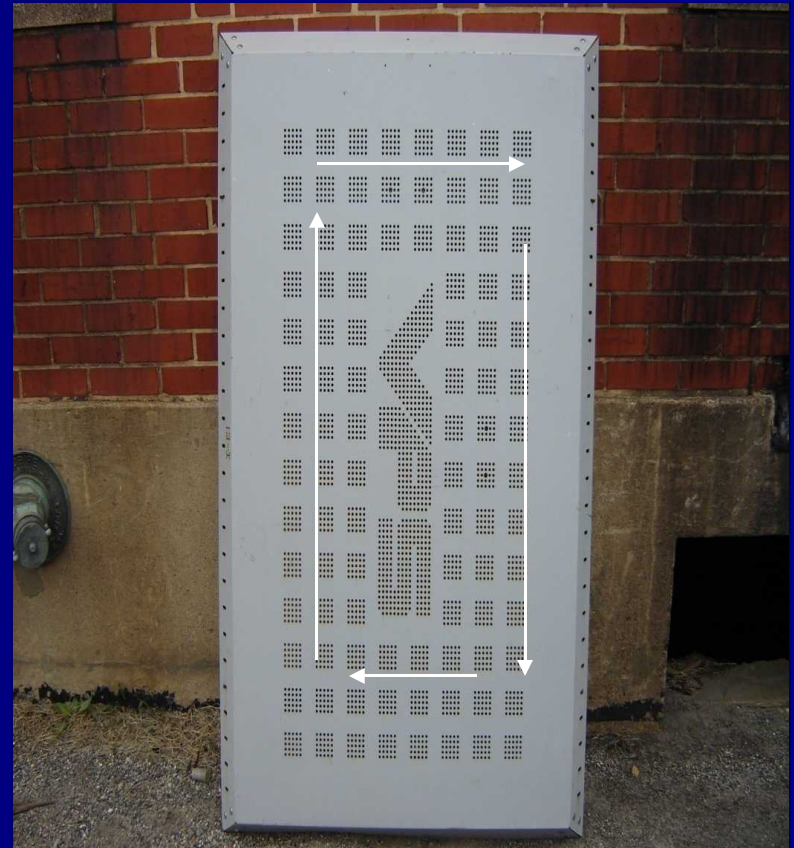
Firefighter Safety



Covering a basement stairs that are rotted away

Window entry option-2

- Use the pick end of the axe and create a hole
- Then use the blade and cut through the metal
- This method is time consuming but is an alternative if no saw is available





Firefighter Safety

- If you are on the inside and need to remove a window or door, use a halligan or axe and beat the middle of the metal hanger bars causing them to pull in
- (takes approximately 7-8 hits per bar)



Summary

- Many different versions of the VPS, there is no one technique for all the systems
- Firefighter Safety needs to be top priority when deciding to enter these structures
- Incident Commanders should anticipate on delayed entry and adjust fire ground tactics accordingly



For More Information

- <http://www.vacantpropertysecurity.com/>
- <http://www.vententersearch.com/>
- NORDFIREPHOTOS : photos : Chicago Fire Dep

Thanks to the following

- Vacant Property Security
- EVD H. J. Lancellotti, Truck Company #5
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